



IDAHO BIRDING TRAIL

East Central Region

Salmon • Stanley • Challis

16 Salmon River Float-Challis Section

(208) 756-2271

DIRECTIONS: JUNCTION BRIDGE TO WATTS BRIDGE (14 mi float-5 hrs): S on US 93 from Challis 2.9 mi (mp 159.8) (be aware that milepost markers along US 93 change sequence at the junction with ID 75); L (E) onto gravel rd 0.1 mi to boat ramp; float to Watts Bridge. **PENNAL GULCH TO WATTS BRIDGE (7 mi float-2 hrs):** N from the junction of US 93/Main St ~2 mi; E onto gravel rd at mp 248.7 (signed "Sportsman's Access") 0.5 mi; E at second right for 0.7 mi; L (N) onto Public Access Road for 0.9 mi to river; float to Watts Bridge. Take out for both trips at WATTS BRIDGE: N from Challis on US 93 to mp 256.7; L (W) into Watts Bridge "Sportsman's Access" site; boat ramp at end of short access rd.

Excellent birding and stunning scenery are offered by boating the Challis reach of the Salmon River. Drift boats, paddle boats, kayaks, and canoes are all suitable vessels to float this relatively easy (Class II) section of river. This birding float is recommended from late spring to early fall, when birds are present and river conditions are generally ice-free. Osprey, Belted Kingfisher, Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, and Sandhill Crane can be seen along the banks and adjacent agricultural fields in the first few miles of the float. Scan the cottonwoods and willows for Red-naped Sapsucker, American Kestrel, Northern Flicker, Violet-green and Tree Swallows, thrushes, and warblers. Mallard, Common Merganser, and Canada Goose are fairly common, but keep eyes peeled for the occasional Cinnamon Teal or Wood Duck in backwater sloughs. As you approach the Challis Cliffs, watch for Red-tailed Hawk, White-throated Swift, Say's Phoebe, Rock and Canyon Wrens, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, and Peregrine Falcon. Near Pennal Gulch, scan the west bank to catch a glimpse (or hear the gobbling) of a resident flock of Wild Turkey.

